

The Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavior Therapy Group Counseling with Assertive Training and Cognitive Restructuring Techniques to Reduce Social Media Addiction

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Abstract

Social media addition is the most common problem experienced by students. The cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with assertive training and cognitive restructuring techniques were predicted to reduce this addiction. In line with this assumption, the present study attempted to examine its effectiveness. It used a pretest-posttest control group design and involved 24 students grouped into three. The subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of students with medium and high social addiction levels. For the data, the current study took them using an instrument of social networking addiction scale which was adopted into Indonesian with the cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92. Based on the Wilcoxon test, both techniques were effective to reduce students' social media addiction. Further implication and limitation will be available in the discussion chapter.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media are forms of instant media with various functions, such as communication and information seeking. Data show that the internet users in Indonesia in 2020 reached 196.7 million people or 73.7% of the total population (Jatmiko, 2020).

The internet is dominated by the increasing social media users which increased 59% of the total 272.1 million Indonesian people in 2020 (Moedia, 2020). A study by Hootsuite (2020) revealed the social media users in Indonesia reach 150 million or 56% of the total population with 48% or 130 million of them are the gadget-based social media users (Databooks, 2019).

Social media are information technology with comprehensive facilities, such as facebook, instagram, whatsapp, and other multifunctional applications which can be used for both positive and negative purposes (Sari, Ilyas, & Irdil, 2017). A good use of social media is there when the access is in a normal duration without harming either cognitive or behavioral comfort and brings no negative effect like addiction. Oppositely, it is bad if the usage has caused one's thoughts to be maladaptive and pathological behavior. For students, social media usage is often motivated by school assignments, while another reason is due to personal needs for entertainment. Entertaining contents can cause someone to feel at home using social media for long and lead to addiction.

Social media addiction is troublesome since the sufferer has no control over himself (Longstreet, 2017). Young and Rogers (in Ahsan & Hakim, 2021) classifies two kinds of internet user, namely the healthy and the troublesome ones. The healthy user access the internet not more than 8 hours per week, while the troublesome one spends 38.5 hours per week, or 5 hours per day.

Obviously, social media addiction can contribute to negative impact on students' academic achievement, not to mention disrupting their cognition, body, psychology,

and behavioral development, including financial, poor interpersonal relationships, poor friendships, social anxiety, impaired vision, poor relationship with family, lack of spirituality and failure to fulfill responsibilities.

Students who are addicted to social media prefer socializing with their friends online to offline in real life. If it goes extreme, this will make them anti-social. A student done by Swansea University in Wales found some people who withdraw themselves whenever they pause using social media (Rashid & Kenner, 2019). Another study by Kolhar, et al., (2021) shows that 97% of students access social media, while there is only 1% of them access it for the sake of academics. Further, a study done in Pakistan found that social media give more negative effects on university students' behavior than the positive ones. (Abbas, et al., 2019).

Social media addiction can also disrupt one's sleeping quality (Sumen & Evgin, 2021). Hou, et al., (2019) state that social media have negative impacts on students' mental and academic performance. It is also related to emotional intelligence and learning achievement in which the higher one's emotional intelligence and academic achievement, the lower their social media usage is. (Mulawarman, et al., 2019).

Another social media addiction was found by Hakim & Raj (2017) in India where 11.8% of students experienced social media addiction due to their amount of time spent for them and chat room.

One thing to consider is social media addiction on students urges to be addressed immediately because when this happens continuously to Senior High School or SMA students, they will suffer from that addiction. SMA students have the nature of high curiosity so that they sometimes are not able to filter good and bad things from social media. Therefore, there needed an intervention to reduce that addiction, such as by the use of a cognitive behavior therapy approach in group counseling. The cognitive behavior therapy counseling not only focuses on behavior, but also individual's

cognitive distortion for problem solving (Corey, 2015).

Gladding (2012) states that a cognitive behavior therapy approach is beneficial for solving problems related to anxiety, worry, stress, self-esteem, and social interactions caused by social media addiction by eliminating irrational thoughts to be the rational ones.

This study attempted to examine the effectiveness of the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with assertive training and cognitive restructuring techniques to reduce social media addiction. This phenomenon is a serious problem for educators at a high school level, so the present study not only reinforces the previous studies, but also helps educators to assist students' social media addiction problems. In terms of novelty, this study used the cognitive

behavior therapy group counseling with assertive training and cognitive restructuring techniques because the previous studies only reached the relationship between variables without providing interventions. Moreover, an assertive technique is rarely used to reduce social media addiction.

METHODS

A purposive sampling technique was used to select 24 subjects of the study of 291 total students in class XI & XII at SMA Negeri 1 Pagelaran, Pringsewu Regency, Lampung. They were further grouped into three with eight members for each. Meanwhile, the criteria for selecting research inclusion and exclusion subjects are presented in table 1.

Tabel 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criterion
1.	SMA Negeri 1 Pagelaran students in class XI dan XII	SMA Negeri 1 Pagelaran students in class X
2.	Aged ≥ 17 years	Aged ≤ 17 years
3.	Suffering from social media addiction at medium and high levels	Suffering from social media addiction at a low level
4.	Willing to participate in this study from the start till the end	Unwilling to participate

The data in this study were collected using a social networking addiction scale developed by Shahnawaz and Usama (2020) based on Griffiths' theory (2005). Since it is originally from abroad, a back translation process was carried out to adapt the instrument. The instrument has six indicators, namely (1) Salience 4 items, (2) Mood modification 3 items, (3) Tolerance 3 items, (4) Withdrawal 4 items, (5) Conflict 3 items (6) Relapse 4 items. Then, this scale has five alternative answers (1 = strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree). Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests, 21 items were declared valid and the instrument got the value of cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92.

This study was experimental and used a pretest-posttest control group design by involving three groups, namely two experimental groups and one control group.

There were several steps taken during the research.

First, pretest was done to measure the level of students' social media addiction prior to the provision of the intervention. This aimed to select students with the determined criteria. It resulted in 24 students who suited, and these students were grouped into 3, namely experimental group A, experimental group B, and control group C. the group A group received the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with an assertive technique, the group B received the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with a cognitive restructuring technique, and the group C received no special treatment.

Second, the interventions of the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with assertive training and cognitive restructuring techniques

were given for five sessions with the time allotment of 2x45 minutes for each.

The group A got the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with an assertive training technique. In session 1, it was given an assessment to diagnose how the leader explored his members' ideas, attitudes, and irrational concepts. In session 2, the roots of problem were discussed, and all the members were asked to express their feelings in either spoken or written. In session III, there arranged interventions in the form of applying techniques where group leader prepared his group members for role playing. Session IV focused on therapy and behavioral interventions, namely group leaders helped group members distinguish between what was and was not needed, what to and not to do to solve the problem. Session 5 was the time to give prevention and self-help training where the group leader checked and ensured the progress experienced by group members and provided positive reinforcement.

Group B received the treatment of the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with a cognitive restructuring technique. In session 1, the group was assessed by having the group leader analyzing the thoughts of his members in a stressful condition which is full of anxiety when using social media. In session 2, the roots of the problem were examined. Here, the group leader asked group members to identify irrational thoughts and recognize why there was one negative thought and another positive thought. Session 3 required the leader to teach his members to restructure their self-destructive thoughts (coping thought). Session 4

focused on the therapy and behavioral intervention by having the leader understand the beliefs developed in his members and ask them to shift their maladaptive and dysfunctional beliefs. In session 5, prevention and self-help training were given. Here, the leader checked and ensured the progress of his members followed by positive reinforcement.

Group C received no treatment. The members of this group only filled in the instrument during pretest and posttest after the treatments were given to group A and group B. Third, the posttest was done to determine any changes or reduction of social media addiction by the students. After that, the data obtained in the pretest and posttest were analyzed using a Wilcoxon signed ranks test to see the reduction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pretest results of 24 students showed that the addiction score in all groups was high, namely group A was 84.63, group B was 79.63, and group C was 77.13. After the treatment, the scores declined to 55.13 in group A, 42.48 in group B, and 76.87 in group C. In these data, the scores in pretest were higher than those of posttest. Therefore, there happened some changes in the implementation of the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with assertive training and cognitive restructuring techniques. Further, the effectiveness of both techniques was discovered using a Wilcoxon signed rank test, and to see the difference in the effectiveness, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted.

Table 2. The Results of Wilcoxon and Kruskal-Wallis Tests

Group	Pretest		Posttest		Z
	M	SD	M	SD	
AT	84.63	6.61	55.13	10.19	-2.521 ^b
CR	79.63	6.55	42.38	5.61	-2.527 ^b
Control	77.13	10.33	76.87	10.25	-1.000 ^b
X ²	2.985		6.417		

Notes: Z = Wilcoxon, X² = Kruskal Wallis

Based on table 2, the assertive training (Z = -2.521, p <0.05), while cognitive restructuring was effective to reduce social media addiction by (Z = -2.257, p <0.05), whereas

the control group did not experience significant changes due to no treatment ($Z = -1.000$, $p > 0.05$). Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, there were differences in the level of effectiveness of cognitive behavior therapy group counseling services with assertive training and cognitive restructuring techniques where the values were obtained ($X^2 = 2.985$, $p < 0.05$) in the pretest and ($X^2 = 6.417$, $p < 0.05$) in the posttest. This finding has proved that there were differences in the level of effectiveness of the three groups. Then, a Mann-Whitney U test was carried out to compare the level of effectiveness of the three groups. The results are in table 3.

Table 3. The Results of Mann-Whitney U Test

Group	Z	P
AT-CR	-2.161	< 0.05
AT-K	-3.048	< 0.05
CR-K	-3.366	< 0.05

Based on the results of Mann-Whitney test, the effectiveness difference between the assertive training and cognitive restructuring was small, namely ($Z = -2.161$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, the difference between the assertive training and control group also had the same thing by ($Z = -3.048$, $p < 0.05$), while the cognitive restructuring group and the control group had a higher level of effectiveness than the assertive training and control group by ($Z = -3.366$, $p < 0.05$). Based on this comparison, it can be concluded that cognitive restructuring techniques worked more effective for reducing social media addiction.

This study aimed at determining the level of social media addiction by the students at SMA Negeri 1 Pagelaran, Pringsewu Regency, Lampung. Another aim was to examine the effectiveness of both techniques in the implementation of group counseling. The last objective was to assess the level of effectiveness of both techniques to reduce the social media addiction through the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling. In details, the findings are elaborated as follows.

Based on the findings, it was very clear that students still had high social media addiction. Social media addiction experienced

by students will cause students to become very dependent on social media, so they are willing to spend a long time just to achieve satisfaction (Fauziawati, 2015). Social media makes students indifferent to their responsibilities as students which has an impact on delays in collecting school assignments, reduced study time and decreased achievement at school because of their business spending their time accessing social media (Mim, Islam, & Paul, 2018).

The findings of this study have confirmed that the treatment of the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with assertiveness was effective to reduce students' social media addiction at SMA Negeri 1 Pagelaran, Pringsewu Regency, Lampung. Valerijs & Dzintra (2022) revealed the relationship between assertiveness and addiction to social media is passive, assertive and aggressive. Confident people are able to act responsibly and respectfully. They are able to justify their views calmly and argumentatively. However, passive people limit themselves in their activities, even aggressive people tend to control others, damage their self-esteem, and tend to use force to dominate.

Khairunnisa & Putri (2019) in their study mentions that people who have low levels of assertiveness tend to use social media as a means of communication to express themselves. Then, Usraleli's study (2022) shows that an assertive training technique is effective in stopping negative thoughts in drug addicts. Assertive training programs can improve adolescent self-esteem, assertiveness and knowledge to prevent online game addiction (Renidayanti & Suhaimi, 2018).

Terwase et al., (2019) in their study that focused on assertive training and psycho-education techniques as a measure to prevent drug abuse among middle school students in Negeria revealed that assertive training and psycho-education techniques have a significant treatment effect in preventing drug abuse in among middle school students.

Hojjat et al., (2016) explain that an assertive training technique is effective for children with various psychological, social and behavioral problems from drug-addicted parents.

The results of this study indicated that the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling treatment with a cognitive restructuring technique was effective in reducing social media addiction among students of SMA Negeri 1 Pagelaran, Pringsewu Regency, Lampung. This is supported by a study by Fadil et al., (2019) that students who receive group counseling with a cognitive restructuring technique get their internet addiction reduced. It is because a cognitive restructuring technique can increase self-efficacy and assertiveness (Aliem et al., 2020).

A cognitive restructuring technique is effective in reducing online game addiction (Sholihah, 2019). It can prevent the phenomena and symptoms of fear of missing out (Afdilah, Hidayah, & Lasan, 2020).

The results of a field study showed that there were differences in the level of effectiveness between the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with assertive training and cognitive restructuring techniques. It was found that the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with a cognitive restructuring technique appeared to be more effective for reducing social media addiction.

Bryant et al., (2009) in their study presents that a cognitive restructuring technique is able to improve individual's mindsets. Meanwhile, Mitchell & Krumboltz (1987) in their investigation also concludes that cognitive restructuring is more effective in helping decision making and attitude determination. Again, the findings of a study by Yanti, Aryani & Sinring (2018) also prove that a cognitive restructuring technique has an effect on reducing the level of misuse of social media by students at SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng.

CONCLUSION

With regard to the findings, it can be concluded that the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with assertive training and cognitive restructuring is effective to reduce students' social media addiction at SMA Negeri 1 Pagelaran, Pringsewu Regency, Lampung. In

terms of effectiveness, the cognitive restructuring technique performs better.

This study has several implications for related parties, namely school counselors must consider coping skills in the initial process of the treatment to socialize ABC concepts and identify students based on those concepts. The counselors are also required to clearly trigger the exploration of counseling distortions. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct studies on the level of social media addiction through gender analysis between male and female students. They can also develop their own social media addiction scale based on indicators from several experts.

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